

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A process for connecting smoking article components comprising:

feeding a glued connecting sheet on a roller;

feeding a cigarette/tip group on a grooved drum;

transferring the connecting sheet to the cigarette/tip group such that the connecting sheet is arranged on the cigarette/tip group with two free ends;

forming partially connected components;

reducing a spacing between the partially connected components; and

rolling the cigarette/tip group to wrap the connecting sheet around the cigarette/tip group,

wherein, after transferring the connecting sheet to the cigarette/tip group, the process further comprises applying one of the two free ends of the connecting sheet to the cigarette/tip group to form the partially connected components.

2. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 1, wherein the connecting sheet is transferred onto a junction point of the cigarette/tip group.

3. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 1, wherein the roller feeds a plurality of glued connecting sheets that are positioned with a defined spacing and the grooved drum feeds a plurality of cigarette/tip groups.

4. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 3, further comprising rotating the roller and the grooved drum such that a respective connecting sheet is successively transferred to a respective cigarette/tip group.

5. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 1, wherein the connecting sheet is transferred to located asymmetrically on the cigarette/tip group.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently amended) The process in accordance with claim 6 7, wherein the one of the two free ends is the front free end viewed in a conveying direction of the cigarette/tip group.

8. (Currently amended) The process in accordance with claim 6 7, wherein the free end of the connecting sheet is applied by an application device.

9. (Canceled).

10. (Previously presented) The process in accordance with claim 1, wherein the grooved drum comprises seats and the cigarette/tip group is located in one of the seats, and the spacing between the partially connected components is reduced by reducing a spacing between the seats of the grooved drum.

11. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 10, further comprising transferring the partially connected components to a drum.

12. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 11, wherein the partially connected components are transferred to the drum at a spacing corresponding to the reduced spacing of the seats of the grooved drum.

13. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 1, wherein the roller feeds a plurality of glued connecting sheets and the grooved drum feeds a plurality of

cigarette/tip groups, and the connecting sheets and the cigarette/tip groups are joined at a same spacing.

14. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 11, wherein, after the transfer of the partially connected components to the drum, the process further comprises increasing the spacing between the seats of the grooved drum.

15. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 11, wherein, after the transfer of the partially connected components to the drum, the rolling of the cigarette/tip group is a rolling of the partially connected components.

16. (Original) The process in accordance with claim 15, wherein the rolling is performed as a multiple rolling of the partially connected components.

17. (Currently amended) A device for connecting smoking article components comprising:

a roller structured and arranged to a feed glued connecting sheet;

a grooved drum structured and arranged to feed a cigarette/tip group; and

said roller and said grooved drum are structured and arranged to connect the connecting sheet to the cigarette/tip group in such a manner that the connecting sheet has two free ends when connected to the cigarette/tip group,

wherein the grooved drum includes a plurality of seats structured and arranged so that a spacing between said plurality of seats is changeable, and

a device for applying one of the two free ends of the connecting sheet to the cigarette/tip group to form the partially connected components.

18. (Original) The device in accordance with claim 17, wherein said roller is structured and arranged to feed a plurality of connecting sheets with a defined spacing.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently amended) The device in accordance with claim ~~49~~ 17, wherein the applying device is arranged to apply a first free end of the connecting sheet, when viewed in the conveying direction of said grooved drum.

21. (Currently amended) The device in accordance with claim ~~49~~ 17, further comprising a transfer drum, wherein the applying device is located between said roller and said transfer drum relative to the conveying direction of said grooved drum.

22. (Currently amended) The device in accordance with claim ~~49~~ 17, wherein said applying device comprises a rotational body.

23. (Currently amended) The device in accordance with claim ~~49~~ 17, wherein said applying device comprises at least one application element.

24. (Original) The device in accordance with claim 23, wherein said application element comprises a projection.

25. (Previously presented) The device in accordance with claim 23, wherein said application elements are spaced to correspond to a spacing between said plurality of seats during the connection of the connecting sheets to the cigarette groups.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Original) The device in accordance with claim 25, further comprising a device for changing the spacing between said plurality of seats.

28. (Original) The device in accordance with claim 23, wherein said application element is rotatable so that said at least one application element contacts the one free end.

29. (Original) The device in accordance with claim 17, further comprising at least one rolling station located to wrap the connecting sheet around a junction point of the cigarette/tip group.

30. (Original) A machine of the tobacco processing industry comprising said device in accordance with claim 17.

31. (Original) The machine in accordance with claim 30, wherein said machine is a filter tipping machine.

32. (Previously presented) A process for connecting smoking article components comprising:

feeding glued connecting sheets on a roller;

feeding cigarette/tip groups on a grooved drum, wherein each cigarette/tip group has a longitudinal axis;

connecting the connecting sheets to the cigarette/tip groups without rotating the cigarette/tip groups about their longitudinal axes, wherein the connecting sheets are connected to the cigarette/tip groups in such a manner that the connected connecting sheets have two free ends;

applying first free ends of the two free ends, when viewed in the cigarette/tip group conveying direction, to the cigarette/tip groups without rotating the cigarette/tip groups about their longitudinal axes, thereby forming partially connected components; and

applying the second free ends of the two free ends, when viewed in the conveying direction, to the cigarette/tip groups by rotating the cigarette/tip groups about their longitudinal axes.

Claims 33 – 35. (Canceled).